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STAR- TRAILS

ETHLENE BOONE COX

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Mr. L. D. Chalmers

Birthday Greeting

May the Day dawn for you
In Happiness-and each moment
be made more precious by c
sense of the love and
Best Wishes of your friends



Best wishes of the day

Yours in sincere appreciation

Mrs. J. B. Boatright


Mrs. W. L. Ball

Vonnie F. Lance

Mrs. Geo. E. Davis

May 5th 1927





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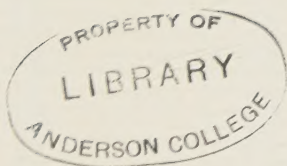
STAR TRAILS

Star Trails

By

ETHLENE BOONE COX

President, Woman's Missionary Union,
Southern Baptist Convention



NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE
SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD
OF THE
SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

4501

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Sunday School Board
Southern Baptist Convention
Nashville, Tenn.

8888

Printed in the United States of America

Women are the poetry of the world,
in the same sense as the stars are the
poetry of heaven. Clear, light-giving,
harmonious, they are the terrestrial
planets that rule the destinies
of mankind.—*Hargrave.*

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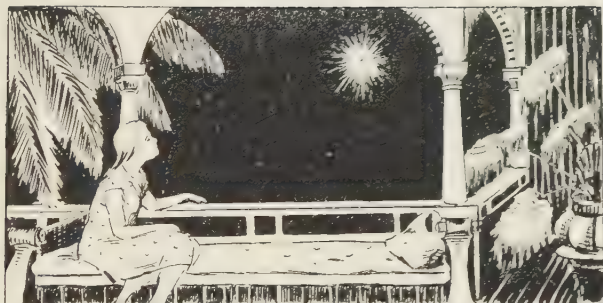
Star Trails That Have Grown Dim

Stars That Will Shine Forever

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A WORD FOR YOU

"Yours on the Star Trail," has come to be a meaningful close to letters from the young women who attended the third Young Woman's Auxiliary Camp at Ridgecrest, North Carolina, in June of 1926. As they meet each other after weeks of absence, one hears, "I am still following the Star Trail; isn't it wonderful to try?" Because these vesper messages of Mrs. W. J. Cox, President of the Woman's Missionary Union, Southern Baptist Convention, meant so much of inspiring helpfulness to two hundred young people who heard them, we have urged until Mrs. Cox has written them down. They are sent out with the hope that other young women, or older, who read them may also follow the "Star Trail." The attractive drawings are the work of Miss Emma Whitfield.



First Steps on the Star Trail

"When Christ ascended
Triumphantly from star to star,
He left the gates of heaven ajar."

STAR trails lead upward to him who said,
"I am the root and offspring of David,
and the bright and morning Star."

Recently, I saw a beautiful painting by Speer, called *The Evening Star*. It is the figure of a lovely woman melting into the deep blue of the evening sky. Above her forehead, like a radiant gem in a diadem, gleamed a glorious star. One stood entranced before the

beauty and grace prisoned there by the artistic skill of the creator.

Musing on this exquisite imagination of the artist, a sublime picture of sacred history arose in my mind. On a somber background, representing centuries of waiting and yearning for the Messiah, there scintillated the lesser stars who foretold the Desire of all Nations who was to come. Prophets, like blazing comets, appeared to dip below the horizon, leaving the stardust of prophecy to be read by countless generations. For centuries the harps of nature sang of him. The wind in canyons deep and lone in faraway hemispheres murmured his name. The purple seas rose and fell with ecstasy at the Creator's coming. Each dawn foretold the Sun of Righteousness that would arise with healing in his wings. The waiting people murmured, "How long, O, Lord, how long?" One wondrous day the "Word had breath," and the bright and morning Star appeared. Light, Love, Mercy and Power flooded the somber background of the ages and shone far out into infinite space—even to every needy human soul.

The Psalmist wrote, "And as I was musing, the fire burned." Strange fires are kindled

in our hearts as we muse on the beauty of the bright and morning Star. In quiet meditative hours as we contemplate paths that lead to him, we would that the fires of our hearts be kindled into a higher and holier flame. If, as we think together, we are conscious of his holy presence in the heart, guiding our thoughts and expanding our souls, then we are content, for as we muse, strange yearnings will lift our hearts into friendship with Jesus.

Friendship with Jesus! It is the first step on the star trail. A personal acceptance of him as our Saviour through the forgiveness of our sins by his shed blood is the first requisite for climbing the star trail. He has taken us into a marvelous partnership and ennobles us by giving us the sacred privilege of his friendship. He is the perfect Friend. As we seek to do his will and follow his commands we become more like him. All who follow the star trail seek to copy this bright and morning Star into their lives. There is such infinite diversity in this great Light it is not surprising that no two Christians have the same luster, for as Christ is ever lifted, some new beauty shines forth. So varied is the human individuality

that although all are attempting to portray the same Ideal each represents him differently. We do not lose our individual personalities in so doing, but we all meet on the glorious plane of our love for him.

John, the Beloved, gives us the inspiring thought, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I call you friends: for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."

There are requisites for this friendship, conditions that we must fulfil. There must be a personal acceptance of him as Saviour. There must be obedience. To obey him we must know his commands; this necessitates a knowledge of his holy Word. There must be a free interchange of thoughts which means a time each day for intimate converse with our Friend.

There must be perfect trust. Perhaps there are many things in our lives that we cannot explain, but we must trust. We may have set our desires on things that are unworthy, things that would prove to be but ashes in our hearts, so God, in his goodness, sets them aside. The

words of Dr. F. B. Meyer fall like healing balm upon our hurt hearts: "He may leave you long without succor. He may allow you to toil against a tempestuous sea until the fourth watch of the night. He may seem silent and austere, tarrying two days still in the same place, as if careless of the dying Lazarus. He may allow your prayers to accumulate like unopened letters on the table of an absent friend. But at last he will say: 'O man, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.' "

The enemies of Alexander the Great sent him a letter warning him that his physician would give him poison in the medicine, thinking the conqueror would refuse it and his life be endangered. Alexander read the letter and placed it under his pillow. When the physician came and offered him the potion, looking full into his physician's eyes he drank it, then reached under his pillow, drew out the letter and handed it to his physician. That is an illustration of perfect trust.

As our Master in his hour of bitter agony prayed, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me; nevertheless, not as

I will, but as thou wilt," so we are to take his yoke and learn of him.

Some of us are just beginning to know the glories of this divine love and trust while others have found that truly there is no shore to God's mercy. The life that knows this friendship of trust has a winsomeness and charm that draws all nearer to the Master.

"As some rare perfume in a vase of clay
Pervades it with a fragrance not its own,
So when Thou dwellest in a mortal soul,
All heaven's own sweetness seems round it thrown."

It is encouraging to know that this friendship with Jesus will deepen day by day as we seek to know and do his will. We attain ideals in life by faithful practice and persistent effort. We will attain Christian graces and virtues by faithfully seeking the will of the Master. Undying lessons of his power to change human lives are seen in his earthly friendships. He took men and women who seemed unlikely material and gave them something of his own radiant beauty. This he does for us.

Queen Victoria once visited a paper mill near Windsor Castle. She went plainly dressed, with only one attendant. The foreman did not recognize her. She observed a

number of ragpickers emptying out rags that had been gathered from the gutters and alleys of the great city. These looked as if they never could be made clean and the queen was amazed to hear the foreman explain that from these blackened and filthy rags the finest paper would be made. When she had gone the foreman learned her identity. Some days later a package of the most exquisite paper bearing the crest of the queen was delivered at the palace. A note from the foreman explained that the paper was made from the very rags the queen had seen on the occasion of her visit.

The Saviour takes humanity from the gutters and alleys of sin and cleanses blackened lives with his blood until they are white as snow. He then stamps them with the seal of his divine likeness and sets their feet upon the star trail. They are now ready for a life of power through abiding in him.

A Western agricultural school made this interesting experiment. A harness of strap iron was fastened around a squash in such a way that as the squash grew the expanding iron harness registered the strength the squash exerted upon it. The young squash lifted at different stages of its growth weights of sixty,

five hundred, eleven hundred and eventually three thousand pounds. Even a squash may do something of moment! It was able to do this only so long as it abided in the vine. Had the squash been severed from the vine the growth would have ended. Jesus said that all power in heaven and on earth has been given unto him, so when the weakest soul abides in the True Vine he can live a life of power.

It is a very tender thought that the great Creator wanted the friendship of man. He sought converse with Adam in the cool of the day. He exalted Abraham by calling him friend. The only begotten Son also craved the love and friendship of men. He was sorrowful when the rich young man turned away, for Jesus "looking on him loved him." Through his keenest suffering in the garden he desired the friendship and sympathy of the three disciples. He longs for your friendship today.

"God loves to be longed for, he loves to be sought;
For he sought us himself with such longing and love,
He died for desire of us, marvelous thought!
And he yearns for us now to be with him above."

In his marvelous love for us Christ put his lips to the poison of sin and died. When we

think of that wonderful love and the offer of his friendship we long to fall at his feet and surrender to him the life he has redeemed.



The Book of Star Trails

Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work. *2 Tim. 3: 16-17.*

THE Bible is the lamp unto the feet and the light unto the upward path of a living, serving people. It is an universal light through which all nations shall one day come to worship and glorify God. The righteousness portrayed in the Bible exalts a nation and blesses it with a delightful land.

While it is an universal light, it is also an individual lamp as attested by its unequaled circulation. The Bible has been translated into more than seven hundred languages and dialects and put in raised type for the blind. Every year thirty million copies come from the press at the rate of eighty thousand a day. We find it everywhere we go. It is placed in every room of our large hotels. A new and exclusive hotel in a great metropolis refused the offer of the Gideons to furnish Bibles for its rooms on the ground that its patronage was too

select and exclusive. The hotel soon found a serious mistake had been made and corrected it at once.

The Book of the star trail can be bought for a few cents, yet a single copy has been sold for as much as fifty thousand dollars. History records instances of men and women walking miles to read a cherished copy of the Bible. The sacred romance of the perpetuation of the translated Word of God has no parallel in all literature.

The scientific value and power of radium are becoming known to the masses. We are told that every hour radium radiates enough heat to raise its own weight in water from the freezing to the boiling point, and that there is enough energy in a fair-sized piece of radium to drive the biggest liner across the ocean. Yet all the extracted radium in the world is not as large as a baseball. The physician who owns radium must keep it in his own possession. If it be prescribed by another physician, the owner of the radium must apply it and remove it, else he forfeits his insurance. So powerful is this substance that objects placed near it impart the power of radium for a time. "The largest and

purest piece of literary, spiritual and ethical radium in the possession of the human race is the Bible. This Book is the common possession of all, yet it remains undiminished in its glory and power. Its eternal marvel is in its inexhaustibleness. Preachers, students, and commentators still come to it thirstily, as to a perennial spring."

While bearing great likeness to radium in its power, its influence and its healing, the Bible is unlike it in that the Bible is the common possession of all. Its healing rays are for all the nations, yet they may be possessed by the individual. Its rays exalt a people, yet they penetrate the sinful soul of the individual and that soul in turn becomes radio-active and imparts the eternal verities to others.

"This is the book that speaks with authority,
Comforts, commands, both wounds and heals the heart;
Not like the poem or a history,
Nor yet like the flute or lute with all their art.
What lack I? Do I tremble? Weep? or frown?
Come, let me take this sovereign Bible down."

We ask, "Why should we read the Bible?" The answer is—because it reveals the will of God for his people; it vitally affects our present and eternal life. That eminent English statesman, Gladstone, said: "Talk about the

question of the time, there is but one question: how to bring God's Word into vital contact with the minds and hearts of all classes of people."

There are four simple and practical reasons why we should read the Bible.

1. It is a book of human nature. It is filled with incidents from the lives of men who have taken the star trail or missed the star trail. In it we see ourselves as in a mirror. We see our temptations, our longings, our faults, our own thoughts reproduced in characters that are vividly brought out of the darkness of the centuries, their hearts opened for more intimate knowledge and understanding. "No man beholdeth sin in the abstract, it is always in some special form."

Because it is a book of human nature and meets our human needs, there is a promise for every condition in life. When we become impatient or discouraged and find our lives lacking luster and getting sordid, we can turn to the characters and promises in the Book and stir our waning love and faith into a strong flame. Then we are ready to say, "Give me the comforts of God and I can well bear the taunts of men."

2. The Bible is the foundation of many customs. Our common law is largely founded on the Bible. Many of our present-day methods are based upon its teachings. Men of finance recognize its sound principles in business efficiency and institutional life. This government is established upon the Bible and a belief in God.

The hearts of Christian people appreciate the words of America's foremost statistician, Mr. Roger W. Babson, when he says that our real resources are not steam, electricity, water-power, buildings and railroad shops, but human souls! That this religion which we talk about for an hour a week on Sunday is not only the vital force which protects our community, but it is the vital force which makes our community. Our powerful spiritual forces have not yet been tapped.

3. We may study the Bible as the gem of all literature for it is interwoven in all that will endure. Shakespeare used numerous quotations from fifty-four of the sixty-six books of the Bible. Tennyson has more than two hundred quotations from the Old Testament alone. Abraham Lincoln achieved his rare, pure style

by reading a parable from the Bible over and over again, then closing the Book and writing it in his own words. Through such practice he was able to deliver his matchless address at Gettysburg in five minutes.

That a knowledge of the Bible is necessary is shown in an interesting incident told of a newspaper reporter, who, in using the story of Jericho to illustrate a point, said, they marched around the wall seven times on the seventh day, and when the trumpets sounded, they broke their pitchers and the walls of Jericho fell down. Bible students were amused at the confusion of details.

On a table in a wayside Scottish inn Spurgeon picked up a Bible with a hole eaten all the way through it. The great preacher cried, "Lord, make me a book worm like that!" Christians need to know the Word of God.

4. The Bible is the book of salvation. It testifies of Jesus, "there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." We are bade to hide the Word in our hearts. Lycurgus was a wise law-giver for he commanded that the laws of his country be engraved upon the hearts of his people.

The primal concern of the Christian should be the study of the Bible. It is given for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. Our Christian work is often futile because we do not know the commands, the admonitions and the promises of Jehovah. We are not equal to many situations because of this lack of knowledge.

A druggist once left his store in charge of an unregistered prescriptionist for a few hours. This was illegal, but the owner hoped nothing of importance would happen. Unfortunately, the emergency came for a very powerful drug. The man in charge, unfamiliar with the stock, was not able to cope with the situation. In his long search he so delayed the doctor's order that the patient died ere the medicine was procured from another source. Tragic mistakes have been made by men ignorant of their profession.

Because of our ignorance of the scriptures, we daily fail in the Christian life. We enter a home where tragedy hovers, or sorrow has come, where hearts are yearning for some word of comfort from Jesus, but no soothing Balm of Gilead falls from our lips. We murmur

stereotyped phrases which fall sharply upon tender and bruised hearts. All about us are men and women, who underneath their superficiality are longing to be told of the tender, yearning, winsome love of Jesus. In our own block, in our own town and city, people are dying without Christ while we apparently stand helpless though possessing messages that point to life everlasting. We cannot be content to keep this Word within our own hearts for it is a message for all men.

In one of our missionary periodicals this story appeared: In a far-away country, before an open fire in a rude hut, a missionary was reading the scriptures to some shepherds. He was reading about Jesus, the Good Shepherd. An eager voice interrupted and questioned, "Preacher, is that the Bible you are reading?"

"Yes, it is the Bible, the Word of God."

With his face all aglow, the shepherd said, "I never knew before that it was a sheep book."

It was a true comment which followed: "Yes, it is a sheep book, a fisherman's book, a book for the farmer, the banker, the book-keeper, a book for the housewife, the schoolboy and girl." We cannot stop there. It is a book

for the red man, the black man, the yellow man—a book for all men. We must know a stewardship of the Word of God.

It is a rare, a gripping truth that while the Bible is a message to the nations, it is also an individual message. It teaches mankind how to speak, how to pray, how to love, how to live.

"My friends have loaned me
Books galore,
To guide
My questing feet,
And some have left me
Bitter sore
While others
Lingered sweet.

But none can show me
All the grace
That meets
My upward look,
When simple faith
Sits at the feet
Of the Author of the Book."



The Palace of Prayer

In nothing be anxious, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.—*Phil 4: 6.*

THE palace of prayer is a splendor glimpsed from our knees. It is to be entered by the worshipful, listening heart, that constantly marvels at the richness, beauty and holiness revealed there. The scripture above is a gracious summons into the palace of prayer.

One of the greatest needs in our busy lives is more devotion; more time for quiet communing with the Intercessor; more silent waiting for the power which is found only in the palace of prayer.

The palace of fine arts at the San Francisco exposition attracted much attention by its classic beauty. A series of imposing columns led to the entrance of the building. The architect was asked why so much attention had been given and so much money spent on the entrance. His reply was that as the sight

seers left the shrill whistle of the popcorn and peanut venders and passed through this imposing entrance, their souls would be subdued and they would be capable of appreciating the great works of art.

As we approach the palace of prayer many stately columns full of meaning, carved by a master hand, lead to the entrance. There are beauty, symmetry and strength in their outlines. Some of these entrance columns are, "Pray ye"; "Ask and it shall be given you"; "All things ye shall ask in prayer believing ye shall receive"; "Ye shall seek me and find me"; "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name that will I do that the Father may be glorified in the Son"; "Seek me daily." On and on they stretch in endless rows and as we enter that radiant palace of prayer upheld by these glorious promises of God, our souls are subdued by his greatness.

God spoke to Moses and said, "Come up in the morning and present thyself unto me in the top of the mountain." God wished to meet Moses alone. He wants to be alone with you and me. The Creator wants to meet his child alone in a holy trysting place. The words, "in

the morning," linger with significant sweetness. Morning is still the time for climbing the star trail to the palace of prayer. Down the centuries we hear Jehovah's voice, "Come up in the morning and present thyself unto me." In the morning we are strong, our faith is great, we are unwearied by the tasks and perplexities of the day. Forgetful of morning prayer, in the evening we are weighed down by the weariness of failures.

No more beautiful words expressing joy and eagerness for this morning meeting with the Father can be found than the words of Dr. Joseph Parker:

"Oh, that I might be on the mountain first, and that praise might be waiting for God! I will be astir before the sun; I will be far on the road before the dew rises; and long before the birds sing will I breathe my sweet hymn. O dark night, flee fast, for I would see my God and hear still more of his deep truth! O ye stars, why stay so long? Ye are the seals of night but it is for other light I pine, the light that shows the way to the mount of God. My Father, I am coming, nothing on the mean plain shall keep me away from the holy

heights: help me to climb fast, and keep thou my foot, lest it fall upon the hard rock. Bring with thee honey from heaven, yea, milk and wine and oil for my soul's good, and stay the sun in his course, or the time will be too short in which to look upon thy face, and to hear thy gentle voice. Morning on the mount! It will make me strong and glad all the rest of the day so well begun!"

O youth, in the morning of life, form the prayer habit! In the freshness of life's day talk and walk with God. The sanctuary of the palace of prayer can be found in early childhood.

Christ's earthly life was one of unceasing prayer, and now in glory, he ever liveth to make intercession for his people. The interceding Christ of the centuries gives us a new vision of the sublime place of prayer.

Earthly intercessors have found that prayer has its burdens, its beauties and its blessings. It must burden our hearts before we see its beauties and blessings. Few of us know the burden of prayer, and that fact explains our impoverished lives. How poor in soul-winning our churches must be because of the lack of

intercession! We need to be empowered of God if our work bear fruit.

Prayer has been compared to the bow, the promise to the arrow, faith, the hand which draws the bow that sends the arrow. The bow without the arrow is of no use. God's Word is inseparably woven into prayer. We must know God's promises, the arrows. The work of the Holy Spirit is to bring to remembrance the promises of God. How can they be recalled if we never knew them? One of the burdens of prayer is to know God's promises.

A responsibility is upon us to remove the things which hinder our prayers. "He that turneth his ear from hearing the law even his prayer shall be an abomination." "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask that ye may consume it upon your lusts." "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." There are many conditions for this close companionship with God in the palace of prayer.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote, "She went first to the best adviser, God." In every perplexity and need we should flee to him; nothing can atone for this neglect.

In a textile factory, a new and intricate piece of machinery had been installed. The woman

who was to operate it was given explicit instructions by the foreman to send for him if anything went wrong. In a short time it was necessary to send for the foreman, but when the trouble occurred the second time the operator thought she understood how the foreman adjusted it and attempted it alone. Because of her unskilled adjustment, the valuable machine was broken. When the foreman came, she looked up and said, "I did my best." "No," replied the foreman, "the best was sending for me." When will we learn this lesson in our Christian lives? We rush into serious situations alone. We depend on our own intellect and planning instead of God's power. We organize and organize, when it is the breath of the Almighty we need. The best is always sending for him. Prayer brings us in intimate touch with God and the closer we get to him the mightier is our appreciation of intercession.

Agricultural students have found it is harmful to clear farming land too thoroughly. For years farmers leveled every tree in clearing their farms. It was a foolish practice and often proved disastrous, for winds and storms

frequently destroyed their crops. A few acres of forest in the center and a border of trees around the edge for a windbreak not only prevent evaporation but preserve the underground supply of water. Many large farms are impoverished because of deforestation. It has been proved that growing things need this protection of trees.

Human lives have identical characteristics. In this busy age our lives are too exposed to be fruitful. Throngs of Christians live day after day without spiritual windbreaks. The soul needs to know the secret of his presence and the shelter of the shadow of his wing. The soul needs worship and meditation for these nourish the roots of the Christian life. Without God's Word and the palace of prayer, life is exposed and barren.

The blessings of prayer are abundant and abounding. The marvel is that God's children are content with so little when all the dainties of the King's table are at their command. Mr. Moody tells of the widow in the Scotch Highlands who was in need. He visited her to find how he might help and learned that she had a son in Australia who was doing well. In their

conversation Mr. Moody asked if she ever heard from her son. The mother answered that he wrote her regularly every month but only sent her a little picture in each letter. Mr. Moody was interested and asked to see the pictures. They proved to be ten-pound bank notes. The mother had been living in poverty with plenty in her possession. That is the condition of many of God's children. We live in poverty and need while the rich promises of the Kingdom of Heaven are waiting to be drawn upon.

Through the early dews of each day let us climb the mountain to the palace of prayer and receive the heavenly honey and an anointing of the oil of grace.

"Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make!
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take,
What parched grounds revive, as with a shower!
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower;
We rise, and all, the distant and the near,
Stands forth a sunny outline brave and clear.
We kneel, how weak! We rise, how full of power!
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others, that we are not always strong;
That we are ever overborne with care;
That we should ever weak or heartless be.
Anxious or troubled, when with us in prayer,
And joy, and strength, and courage are with Thee!"

The Shadows We Cast: Our Influence

"No action whether foul or fair,
Is ever done but it leaves somewhere
A record written by fingers ghostly,
As a blessing or a curse."

EVERY life casts a reflection. There is an elusive, indefinable something about each person which we call personality or influence that is constantly falling on others. In some people this personality glows like a flame in the dark, vivid and colorful. In others, it is powerful and dynamic like the rays from radium. Often it is gentle like the fragrance from flowers or an evening breeze. This shadow follows us wherever we go; it cannot be detached at will; it is constant and abiding. Even when we are unconscious of its force it is always impressing others.

A clearly defined shadow is cast by one in a strong light. The Christian on the star trail casts such a vividly outlined shadow. The kind of influence one exerts is vitally important.

Paul writes to the Philippians, "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world." This admonition is to the Christian because his behavior should be seemly, for "each Christian is the best Christian somebody knows." The statement is often made that the Christian is the only Bible the world ever reads and all too often a revised version is needed.

Pharmacists discover it is almost impossible to pour perfume and iodine without getting a few drops on the hand. "Happiness is like perfume: you cannot pour it on others without getting a few drops on yourself." Evil, like iodine, not only stains the container and the hand that pours it but discolours all it touches. A single grain of iodine imparts color to seven thousand times its weight in water, so does sin affect countless lives, darkening and staining all with whom it comes in contact.

The Christian's amusements and pleasures must be blameless and harmless because the Christian is to be seen as light in the world, without blemish. In one of Æsop's fables an

old woman was found sniffing an empty wine jar. She exclaimed, "How good the wine itself must have been to have left behind so sweet a perfume!" Far too many Christians, young and old, are sniffing at the wine jars of denied delights. They would hardly drink the wine itself but are fascinated by the fragrance of life's illicit pleasures. Many times Christian parents are responsible for this attitude in their young people. The father or mother wants the children to have exclusive associates and to move in the so-called best circles. To gain this parents live in coveted residence districts or send their children to private schools for social standing instead of spiritual development. The result is inevitable. In the rapid whirl of a gay life the fine bloom of spirituality is soon lost in the young Christian. Amusements that kill spiritual growth in young people are to be desperately feared. A naturalist said that a dove was so afraid of a hawk that she became frightened at the sight of the feathers. The Christian must fear sin in this same way and avoid all appearances of evil that the life may be blameless and harmless.

To meet existing social conditions it is not enough to say, "don't do this," and "don't do

that." We must seek wholesome pleasures to take the place of the unwholesome things inconsistent with following the star trail. Social pleasures are either perfume or iodine, coloring not only one's own life but influencing the lives and characters of many others.

In the last analysis our amusements are only a means to an end. Boarding an eastbound street car, a dear old lady said to the conductor: "Is this a Fair Grounds car?" "Yes, madam," replied the conductor. "But," persisted the would-be passenger, "it says Fair Grounds on the front and Normal School on the side." "The front sign is right, madam. Get on." "Are you sure," persisted the lady with her foot on the step, "that it is a Fair Grounds car, because it says Normal School on the side?" With exasperation the conductor said, "Get on, lady, we ain't going sidewise." We do not want to be going sidewise even in relaxation and enjoyment. We are headed straight for the land of the Morning Star.

Every fault in a young person is simply the lack of some virtue. Each life must find the weak places in the wall of character and set

about to build them into strong defenses. Sea walls and levees are constantly watched. They are treacherous, and a tiny leak will rapidly grow into a wide crevasse, destroying the levee and bringing destruction to countless lives.

It is a thrilling sight to watch, across an open space, the rush of a powerful, modern, luxurious train with its plume of black smoke caressing its graceful, undulating outlines. It typifies efficiency, modern invention and power. But what chaos, confusion and disaster result if that limited strikes a defective rail. Only a slender thread of steel, seemingly of little consequence in a transcontinental journey, yet that defective rail can hurl the racing train into space and spell calamity, destruction and death. Is there a defective rail in your character? As you start out to make the journey of life your preparation may include the finest and best the age affords; your progress and attainments may be remarkable, but are you watching for the defective rail? The influence of your life is of such importance that your destruction would carry others with you.

The extent of the shadow we cast cannot be determined. The offices of a leading photographer in Boston were on the top floor of a

five-story building. One Saturday night an employee left a faucet open in the developing room. The janitor did not come to the building on Sunday. Early Monday when he arrived with his corps of cleaners the building was almost ruined by water. For thirty-six hours the water had been running steadily. On the fourth floor was an exclusive ladies' restaurant. All the delicate hangings, curtains and rugs were ruined. On another floor was a millinery shop. Beautiful ribbons, velvets, flowers and feathers were spoiled. The first floor had a shoe shop where the water had caused serious damage. The loss amounted to thousands of dollars, wasted because a careless worker failed to turn off a faucet. Life is made up of such tiers. Some live on the top floor and some on the floors below, individuals, families, cities, states, nations. More than ever, since the World War, we realize this truth. No individual and no nation live alone, and none on the ground floor of life. It behooves us to turn off the faucets.

An ancient sage tells of a vessel sailing from Joppa, carrying a passenger who cut a hole in the ship's side beneath his own berth. When

the crew attempted to stop him he said, "What matters it to you? The hole lies under my own berth." How like the rest of us. Often we hear, "It is my own business," or, "It is my own life and I will live it as I please." No one enjoys happiness alone and no one perishes alone in sin. There is wisdom in the clever phrase, "Doubtful pleasures are like doubtful eggs, so likely to be bad, it is safest to let them alone." Also truth is in the wife's reply to her husband who was trying to decide if his collar was soiled—"If it's doubtful, it's dirty." Sometimes young people are tempted to do certain things that appear harmless in themselves, which, when continuously followed, develop into strong sins.

History records that Pompey failing to capture a city persuaded it to take in a few weak and maimed soldiers. The soldiers grew stronger and one night threw open the gates and the enemy swept in and took the city. Seemingly harmless, doubtful things result in serious consequences.

Some years ago in the West a peculiar animal was killed! It proved to be a farmer's cat which had disappeared from home a few years

before. Its life in the wild had doubled its size and turned a tame kitten into a strange, wild animal. Removed from its wholesome environment it had become an ugly creature. In this way the doubtful pleasure can grow into deadly consequences.

There may be liberties for us which lead to no danger, but which to others with less stable character and less helpful training and environment become full of peril. We, as Christians, must sacrifice this liberty lest we endanger another's soul. With Paul we must say, "Therefore, if food is any hindrance to my brother's welfare, sooner than injure him I will never eat flesh as long as I live, never."



Star-Dust

"Bliss was it that day to be alive—
To be young was very heaven."

OVER the triple doorways of the Cathedral of Milan there are three inscriptions, spanning the arches. On one is carved a wreath of roses and underneath is the legend: "All that which pleases is but for a moment." Over the other is a cross and these words: "All that which troubles is but for a moment." Over the great central entrance is the inscription: "That only is important which is eternal."

Those who follow the star trail seek the things which are eternal.

Sincerity is eternal because sincerity is a part of truth.

"Truth is old as God,
His twin identity—
And will endure as long as he,
A co-eternity,
And perish on the day
That he is borne away
From mansion of the Universe,
A lifeless Deity."

Sincerity gives simplicity and power to word and deed. Be yourself, for each soul is an

individual thought of God. Strive to be what you really are in action, in speech and inference. Desire truth in the inward parts.

"To thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou can'st not then be false to any man."

When we are true to our best selves, to our honest convictions, contentment pervades our hearts. When we are insincere we suffer a loss of self-respect. Insincerity robs us of our inward joy. We seek and ask nothing so much in people as sincerity. We do not demand culture, wisdom or success. We only ask sincerity. If we seek to be sincere, to be natural and real, we never become blasé, but remain eternally young. Life will be fascinating with the lure of open doors and winding roads which God prepares and sets ahead for you. If you cling to the childhood joy of play houses, mud pies, stick horses and that bit of colored glass which made all of life rosy for a day, then you have found the blissful fountain of youth. Your soul will marvel in like manner at the star-dust splendors in your spiritual life and growth.

The influence of your life is determined by your sincerity. Sincere people ring true. Some time ago a note in our piano jangled as if out

of tune. We called the piano company and asked them to send a man to see about it. He was unable to find any trouble in the piano. Finally, he asked me to stand and constantly strike the piano key while he lifted every picture from the wall. He moved every vase. At last he moved the clock a tiny bit on the mantel. The jangling instantly ceased. The piano note had been in perfect pitch or tune with the glass face of the clock across the living room. Each time the note was struck the clock face jarred and sang as if the note were tingling. This incident set me to thinking that certain actions mar the clearness of our spiritual influence. Our lives jangle and give forth an uncertain, unmusical tone because they are in tune with questionable, insincere or trivial things.

The jarring note represented only one string on the piano, yet the harmony of the whole was affected because of this defect. One insincerity weakens our influence. It jars. It hurts. It puts the remaining virtues out of tune. "Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith."

Our words must be the words of sincerity and truth. Oh, the power of a word!

A master in word painting once said, "Words are alive with sweetness, with terror, with pity. They have eyes to look at you with strangeness or repose. They are even creative and can wrap a world in darkness for us or flood it with light." Across the years there comes to each of us memory of words. Some are tender words. Others are careless words.

"A goodly sum I'd gladly pay
To any man alive today,
If he would tell me how to slay
That careless word of mine."

Perhaps there are cruel words. All are living words. Time has not effaced them. Some of them are engraved forever upon hearts for good or ill.

"Could mortal lip divine
The undeveloped freight
Of a delivered syllable
'Twould crumble with the weight!"

Not only must we seek sincerity in influence and word, but the star dust of life must know courage. Courage is a glowing quality that gives a glint of force to life.

Some years ago Elbert Hubbard wrote an article that attracted the attention of our nation. We do not hear much of it today. It is called, "Carrying a Message to Garcia." When war broke out between Spain and the United States it was imperative to communicate quickly with the leader of the insurgents. Garcia was somewhere in the mountain fastness of Cuba—no one knew where. No telegram could reach him. Someone said to the president, "There is a fellow by the name of Rowan who will find Garcia for you if anybody can." Rowan took the letter, landed on the coast of Cuba in the night, disappeared into the jungle. Three weeks later he came out on the other side having traversed a hostile country on foot, having delivered the message to Garcia. The point made was this: President McKinley gave Rowan a letter to be delivered to Garcia. Rowan took the letter. He did not ask, "Where is he?" He carried the message to Garcia. General Garcia is dead now, but there are other Garcias. The world is crying for such men as Rowan to carry a message. The Lord of Hosts calls for just such volunteers—the man or woman who can carry a message to Garcia.

In the face of world-wide mission opportunity that challenges our loyalty and faith to lay hold on the greatness of God, God's people, filled with Jonahistic patriotism, sit under gourd vines. God calls this hour. He needs men and women of courage to carry his message. He needs men and women to stir up his people to send the message. He needs young people with courage and heroism to stem the torrent of this pleasure-loving age. He seeks the youth that has caught up the star-dust of life.

Not all people are born with courage. Fine souls can achieve it through habit. In the Chickamauga National Park, at Chattanooga, Tennessee, there is an unique monument, a memorial to a horse. It is called Wisconsin's Riderless Horse. Early in the battle of Chickamauga the rider was killed. Side by side with his companions, through charge after charge, the riderless horse galloped. Just before noon the horse was shot. The soldiers who had witnessed this gallant, almost human bravery buried the body and marked the spot as best they could. Years after, Wisconsin, the state from which both horse and rider came, erected this monument.

Mankind is wonderfully controlled by habit. He can face danger, disaster, even death through a courage that is the outcome of habitually facing his duty. Wendell Phillips once cried, "How prudently men sink into nameless graves while now and then a few forget themselves into immortality." Have the courage to forget yourself into immortality! Be trail blazers. Be original. Emerson said, "What the tender and poetic youth dreams today, and conjures up with inarticulate speech, is tomorrow the vociferated result of public opinion, and the day after is the charter of nations."

Beside sincerity and courage life holds the star-dust of high purpose. High purpose will mean a single-hearted enthusiasm. It means a glorious blindness to everything except the beckoning hand.

When the Persians heard that the prizes in the Olympic games were not money but crowns of laurel, one of them said, "Against what manner of men, O king, hast thou brought us to fight, who contend not for money but for honor!" Truly this is the touchstone that determines whether the race be good or bad.

Strive for eternal treasures, not for rewards wrought in gold and silver. Strive for the things not seen but which you shall receive in heaven. High purpose ever beckons to new heights. It means a constant striving. Cupid complained to Jupiter that he could never seize the muses because he could never find them idle. The life that follows the star trail must know no such things as idleness, indifference, and half-hearted work. High purpose recognizes that each moment is significant. That you live is proof that God has matched you with this hour. Time is a valuable asset.

"I have only just a minute,
Only sixty seconds in it,
Forced upon me—can't refuse it,
Didn't seek it, didn't choose it.
I must suffer if I lose it,
Give account if I abuse it.
Just a tiny little minute—
But eternity is in it."

When Disraeli made his first speech in the House of Commons, he was overwhelmed with contemptuous laughter. He shouted in the face of his tormentors, "You will yet hear me!" and worked as few men are willing to work to make that challenge good. He became master of the House of Commons and one of its most effective debaters.

Where do you long to serve? Decide, by the leading of the heavenly Father, and then set out to fit yourself for it. The world makes way for the man or woman of high purpose. Link your life to Jesus Christ and persevere and work. The world can offer you nothing comparable to the riches of a life in Christ Jesus.

If you have set your feet upon the star trail and seemingly failed, recall the immortal poem by Walter Malone—"Opportunity."

"They do me wrong who say I come no more,
When once I knock and fail to find you in:
For every day I stand outside your door,
And bid you wake, and rise to fight and win.

Wail not for precious chances passed away,
Weep not for golden ages on the wane!
Each night I burn the records of the day:
At sunrise every soul is born again."

A life beautiful holds the star-dust of fundamental virtues. But as in every range of mountains there is always the highest peak, so the life beautiful has its outstanding virtue. It is loyalty to Christ.

God has taken humanity into a marvelous partnership. Carrying his redeeming message to a waiting world offers the most vital challenge of time or eternity. God has ennobled human beings by placing this stupendous task

in their hands. It is an individual task and a united effort.

Loyalty to Christ demands that you be a witness today. Loyalty demands that your life be consistent with your opportunities. It demands that you be not content with a negative life.

There is need of loyalty to Christ today in living, teaching and preaching the old-time faith.

"Faith of our fathers! living still
In spite of dungeon, fire and sword;
O. how our hearts beat high with joy,
Whene'er we hear the glorious word;
Faith of our fathers! holy faith!
We will be true to Thee till death."

Someone has said, "We are purposed by God to be more than a match for the largest circumstance; more than level with the vastest opportunity, more than adequate to the most exacting task. Mighty days are the days of royal privilege." These are mighty days, days of royal privilege. God is calling for men and women of sincerity, courage, high purpose and loyalty to Christ.

The Youth's Companion relates that at a certain moment during the World War it was a bad time on the French front. A colonel of

infantry appeared one night down in the trenches, and, confronting a little group of a dozen soldiers, he called for a volunteer for a task of desperate character. "He will not come back; absolutely not," said the officer, "but I ask for a volunteer."

Three French soldiers dragged themselves to their feet and saluted.

"I asked for one man," said the colonel very gravely.

No one of the three budged.

"Padre," said the officer to a Red Cross man who was present—an American—"I will not decide this. You must decide it. It is a command."

The Red Cross man looked the three soldiers in the face but he could not speak; he could not think. Suddenly there flashed through his mind one of his boyhood games. Out into plain sight, after thirty years, rose the old brick schoolhouse of his childhood, the graceful New England elms that flanked the playground, a noisy group of pupils playing that silly old rigmarole, "Eeny, meeny, miny, moe," ending with "one, two, three, out goes he!" Like a machine he now repeated these

words with the terrible ending, "out goes he."

The young Frenchman who was "he" saluted, turned, climbed up into the rain and the dark but before disappearing leaned back, put his hand on the Red Cross man's shoulder and observed with a smile, "That was a very interesting game—that eeny, meeny—and I won, didn't I?"

Oh, for soldiers of the cross like that! Oh, for soldiers, with such a spirit, to go forth to meet the crying needs of our own land: for volunteers to climb up into the darkness of heathendom, and facing a rain of discouragement, disease, even death, look back and say, "I won, didn't I?"

These qualities make the star-dust of a life beautiful.



Stars That Will Shine Forever

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament: and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever."

IT MATTERS not how long we live but how." They that be wise look beyond the allurements of the vacillating world to the stars that shine forever, "the campfires of my eternal Friend." These everlasting stars that crowd the skies watch in breathless silence while

"One naked star has waded through
The purple shallows of the night."

That star is love. It shines as the brightness of the firmament and drips its misty light in service and soul-winning. Of all the stars that begem the blue fields of the sky, love expressed in serving and soul-winning shines forever and ever. Love is the greatest thing in the world. Love is the fulfilling of the law. Loving people is one of the supreme joys of life and places the soul in harmony with all the rich forces of heaven. Whom shall we love? The story of the Good Samaritan is the Lord's answer to

this question. "Science has made the world a neighborhood; Christianity must make it neighborly."

God so loved that he gave! If we truly love we will give ourselves. We have to die to self to live. "The altar stands in the foreground of every life and can be passed by only at the cost of all that is noblest and best." Ann Hasseltine Judson so loved the heathen world that she gave herself. In a short time she was a bride, a missionary, a mother and a saint. Perhaps some have thought her brief life a sad one, but the sacrificial love of Ann Hasseltine Judson has stirred countless hearts to offer their lives in loving service to win the lost to Christ.

Love that longs to serve fears no such word as consequences. After the battle of Fredericksburg hundreds of Union soldiers lay wounded on the battlefield which was swept by fire for a day and night. Their agonizing cries for water could be heard in each breath of daring silence. None could go to their relief. At length Richard Kirkland, a brave Southern soldier, could bear these cries no longer. He asked permission from his superior officer to

relieve the sufferers. The request was refused. Again he begged to answer the cries of the wounded and at last consent was unwillingly granted. Over the top this brave soldier went, his heart aflame with the noble purpose of relieving the thirst of his dying enemies. As he stood outlined against the sky, the sheer courage of the act caught every eye; not a shot was fired. The fighting ceased while he ministered to the wounded men. He gave them water to quench their burning thirst. He straightened mangled limbs; he tenderly covered their pain-racked forms, then disappeared behind his own lines. There is something sublime in such love and unselfish service. The lives who have moved the world have had this spirit of self-renunciation.

We owe much to those about us but above all we owe them love. Love renews our fellow travelers' flagging zeal and courage. It fans to life the dying embers of the hope long deferred. Love eases the burdens that grow intolerable under the yoke of duty. Love calls into action all the hidden resources of the soul.

When the great inventor, Hudson Maxim, was asked what special training he had

received from his mother, he answered, "None, she just loved me." Love was sufficient to prick the sides of his intent and spur him to accomplishment. One of the great artists of this age was asked to what he attributed his success. His reply was, "My mother's kiss." Numberless times the crude drawings had been brought to his mother for approval. She was never too busy to look at them, offer some word of commendation and stoop and kiss the little son. This love gave to the world a great artist.

Love blends into service. When we love we want to give ourselves in helpful deeds. We minister to Christ in serving humanity. Strange as it may seem, we often serve by simple obedience. Nothing pleases our heavenly Father so much as the unquestioning obedience of his children. A visitor calling in the home of a great philosopher amused himself while awaiting the host's coming by conversing with the philosopher's small daughter. He asked the child, "What is your father teaching you?" "Obedience, sir," she answered. The father was laying the foundation for a great life of service, for service must learn obedience.

A life of service means personal sacrifice. A legend tells us old St. Martin was sitting one day in his monastery cell when a figure of kingly mien appeared and said he was the Christ. The old monk keenly searched the lordly face and figure, then asked, "Where are the nail-prints in your hands?" At this the Evil One disappeared, for the flawless hands held no scars of loving sacrifice or service. If we follow the Christ our hands must bear the scars of service. There is no true happiness without these scars. For years, Donald Hankey, known as the "student in arms," cried out in his mental doubt, "O, that I knew where I might find him!" He resigned his commission in the army and went to serve in the slums. There the joy of his salvation was restored to him as he ministered to those in need. Followers of Christ find that his award for service is still greater service. There is never a time to rest from service. When the friends of Lottie Moon begged her to rest she replied that life had been given her to work in; she had all eternity in which to rest.

"Where is rest? In what isles of the summer-clad seas?
In what garden of balm? 'Neath what sleep-drooping trees?
By what still flowing waters, what lily-fringed streams?
In what meadow of silence, what valley of dreams?
'Neath what thunderless skies, by what hillsides of sleep?
On what moon-lighted mountain or star-lighted deep?
Yes, where on the earth's or the ocean's wide breast
Is the home of release and the harbor of rest?

"Why, here in the cornfield—and take up your hoe!
Right here in this mill—make the paddle wheel go!
Right here with your engine—up steam and away!
Right here with your sewing machine every day,
Where there's work there is rest, and it's nowhere besides,
Though you travel all lands, and you sail every tide.
Where is rest? Go to work, and your spirit renew,
For no man can rest who has nothing to do."

Love is a necessary and vital attribute of soul-winning. It is said there is only one person in England who can get the trunk line to Paris any moment day or night. That person is the King of England. Any message is laid aside when the call stamped in red with the one word, "Royal," is received. Soul-winning is the one business of the King that takes precedence over all others. It is stamped in the red of sacrifice and bears the one word—Royal. "He that winneth souls is wise." "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever."

Phillip is a beautiful example of a soul-winner. He had a listening heart. His rare spirit radiated love and service. As a mocking

bird pours out its soul in a rapture of song, Phillip lived to glorify God. When the Spirit said, "Go near, join thyself to the chariot," Phillip in his eagerness—ran! Phillip felt no hesitancy in approaching a person of authority for the joy of his good news ever sought utterance. Phillip knew the hearts of men were hungry for the Bread of Life. The eunuch was even then reading of the Desire of all nations that would come. Phillip could tell him this Desire had come. Phillip sought and used the wayside opportunities of life in winning to Christ. Do we thus speak to our friends, our schoolmates, our business associates about the Saviour?

The rarest and most coveted art of life is soul-winning. It includes every heavenly grace. If we have a passion for winning souls for Christ, then life has no richer meaning: if we lack it, though we possess all else, life lacks the essential radiance.

The great master of the violin, Paganini, stood before a waiting audience:

"With awkward touch when first he drew the bow
He snapped a string, the audience tittered low.
Another stroke, off flies another string;
With laughter now, the waiting galleries ring.
A third string breaks its quivering strands
And hisses greet the player as he stands.

He stands—the while—his genius unbereft—is calm;
One string, and Paganini left.
He plays—that one string's daring notes uprise
Against that storm as if it sought the skies.
A silence falls, the people bow
And they who erst had hissed, are weeping now.
And, when the last note, trembling, died away,
Some shouted, 'Bravo!' Some had learned to pray!"

Life's harp has many strings. Each one seems necessary. Yet one by one the Master's hand might snap them until only one string is left. In that one string all the octaves and chords of life may be found. In it are Love, Beauty, Harmony, Influence, Grace, Faith, Obedience and Service, all these blended in perfect harmony in the string of soul-winning. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament: and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever."



Star Trails That Have Grown Dim

"Let not him that putteth his hand to the plow look backward
Though the plowshare cut through the flowers of life to its
fountains,
Though it pass over the graves of the dead and the hearts
of the living,
It is the will of the Lord; and his mercy endureth forever."

IN the days of Holy Writ men and women sometimes lost the star trail. They follow it today to find fear and sin overtake them. Circumstances often overwhelm. When followers of the star trail lose the path they wander in a dim, twilight darkness. They have lost the word that made life radiant. They seek the lost chord. Life has suddenly become confused and meaningless.

There is a picture called Drifting Shadows. Great fleecy clouds drift between the sun and the earth, and far below, on mountain and plain lie giant shadows. Life, too, has its drifting shadows. Its way is not all sunshine. Growing things need darkness, rain and the hour of dew. All of us have our gourd vines,

and like Jonah sit under them in sullen disobedience. Like Elijah, we have our Juniper trees of discouragement. Even our star trails grow dim!

Our star trail grows dim because we fail to live close to Jesus, again because we have allowed something worldly to come between us and the Master. At a Sunday-school entertainment a little girl was to give a reading. As the father lifted her to the platform she whispered, "I won't be afraid, daddy, if you stand where I can see you." The father stepped aside to be out of the way and found himself partly concealed behind a pillar. Bravely the little daughter began the reading but when she failed to find her daddy the voice faltered, tears filled her eyes, she could not finish. In following the star trail we sometimes allow certain things to come between us and the Father. We do not keep our eyes on him. Soon we falter and fail. Perhaps we refuse to take up a needed cross. We trudge along dragging our cross instead of bravely bearing it. "He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me." "If any man will come after me let him deny him

self and take up his cross and follow me.” The Christian finds Christ’s cross is easier to bear than to avoid, for Christ’s cross is the sweetest burden ever borne. It is such a burden as “wings are to a bird or sails are to a ship to bring it into harbor.”

A writer has given us the thought that we make our own crosses in life. The cross is made from a long and a short piece of wood. Lay the two side by side and there is no cross, but lay the shorter across the longer and you have a cross. The long piece represents God’s will and the short one our will. Lay the two side by side and there is no cross. Put our will across God’s will and we make the cross in our lives.

Perhaps the first dimness in following the star trail comes in connection with finding our mission in life. At some time we have been led to consecrate our lives definitely to God in some special service. After the decision there comes some seemingly unavoidable hindrance. No way opens up. The star trail grows dim. The thought that God has a distinct plan for each life should inspire every soul to seek and wait for his leading. The practical question

to be faced by every life is how can I know God's plan for me? In biblical days men were sometimes guided to their missions by special revelations. Only rare instances record this supernatural revelation today. We through earnest, even agonizing prayer must seek God's will for us and his specific guidance. Christ said, "I came not to do my will but the will of him that sent me." "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." He is a perfect example of obedience. Day by day he took his tasks from his Father in heaven. Just so will we find God's will and plan for us. All our own plans, personal ambitions and favorite pursuits must be laid at his feet. We must watch for open doors and daily duties, coveting always the best gifts. He promises to show us the more excellent way.

All too often the Christian whose star trail has grown dim frets to do something great and conspicuous. We need the reminder that amidst the monotony of tending sheep, Moses found his burning bush. Brooding through long days and starlit nights awoke David's soul to the throbbing of eternal beauty.

Communion with God in the desert wilderness gave John the Baptist the greatness to cry, "He must increase but I must decrease." The aggressive Saul, struck helplessly blind, was forced to await the will of the Lord. He needed the darkness for a true perspective. That is true of us. God lights only one step at a time. We go on led by conscience, by his holy will revealed in the scriptures and the guidance of prayer.

"I see not a step before me as I tread the days of the year,
But the past is still in God's keeping, the future his mercy
will clear;
And what looks dark in the distance may brighten as I draw
near.

"So I go on not knowing. I would not if I might;
I would rather walk in the dark with God than go alone in
the light.
I would rather walk with him by faith than walk alone by
sight."

Very often in our eagerness to press onward we are like the foolish virgins of the parable of our Lord. The parable tells us they had excellent lamps. A delightful writer says they were perchance of the latest design or genuine antiques. No doubt they were highly polished. They lacked only one thing and that was oil. There came a time when the virgins needed oil. There is tragedy in the

situation. After all the preparation, when the great hour came they lacked the one thing which they were most certain to require. We may be ready to enter the procession of life with our lamps highly polished, representing preparation and readiness yet lack the one thing essential, the spirit of Christ. His power is the flame that makes our life shine. Christ can not use us until we have waited at his feet for his power. Sometimes the dimmed star trail teaches these great truths.

It is a joy to plant narcissus bulbs and watch them grow into flower. Unless the bulbs are kept a long while in the dark they spring up at once, have no roots, are weak, and the flowers imperfect. When kept in the dark until a strong network of roots grows around the pebbles they grow and bloom perfectly. Here is a parable for us. The darkness encountered on the star trail may be his way, "that ye being rooted and grounded in love might be filled with all the fulness of God, and grow up into him in all things which is the head even Christ." All sunshine in life will not grow roots. That we may be rooted and grounded in Christ Jesus, he sometimes puts us back in the dark.

Giant trees are often uprooted during a storm. Their destruction came because they failed to send down strong, tenacious roots. They had flourished in a rich, mellow soil, and were not forced to send hungry roots deep into the earth for nourishment. The strong tree stands unshaken in the cyclone. When life is too easy we are not forced to a great faith and a deep reliance on Christ. If there is a burden, sorrow or shadow in life, it may be his way of putting us back in the dark to grow into the strength of his likeness. "God had one Son without sin; he has none without sorrow." God honors us in giving us burdens. Steam is not applied to the boiler to burst it but to test it. Scales are not weighted to break them but to prove them. Automobile demonstrators climb mountains or drive at lowest speed to show the power of the motor. God's burdens are to test and prove, and not destroy.

If the star trail grows dim, hold fast to God's promises, listen and wait for God's revealed plan. Do not grow discouraged and give up. Nothing is more desolate than an incompleting ruin. It stands a decaying, hollow mockery of its rich promise of victory and achievements.

More desolate still is the hollow ruin of a life
of great possibilities.

“Let me not die before I’ve done for Thee
My earthly work, whatever it be.
Call me not hence with mission unfulfilled;
Let me not leave my space of ground untilled;
Impress this truth upon me, that not one
Can do my portion, that I leave undone.”

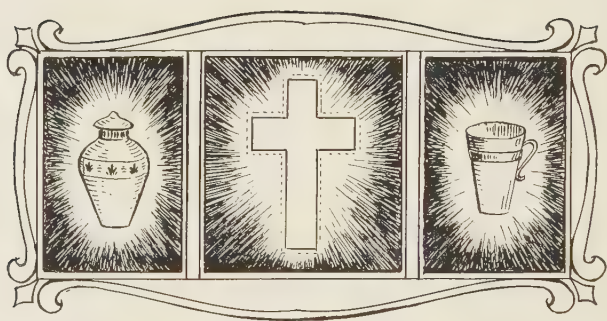
George McDonald tells of a child who ran to her father and asked, “What is poetry?” He answered, “It is the most beautiful thing in the world.” He took down a bound copy of choice poems and showed it to the child, but she was too young to appreciate poetry, and was disappointed. Seeking to take away the evident disappointment, he read some of the exquisite lines to prove their beauty. She could not understand them and went away dissatisfied. As the father sat musing about it, he felt the lesson was more for him than for the little daughter. There were many things in his life that he could not understand. As yet, he had been able to discover no beauty in them. Deep in his heart he knew God’s infinite wisdom had meant those things for his growth and development and one day he would understand God’s strange providences,

even as his little daughter would love and appreciate poetry.

The great painting by Watts, called *Love and Life*, in Tate Gallery, London, might be named "The Star Trail." Life is represented as a beautiful maiden climbing up a steep mountain. Behind the climber is a deep abyss; above her the sheer heights. Love in the guise of a young angel comes to her aid by permitting her to place her hand in his open palm. Above the steep mountain trail there gleams a single star which lights the way.

Life is climbing the star trail to that bright and morning Star. One day "earth will blend into heaven, time into eternity and man into God."





The Investment of Life

“Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?”

THE words of Daniel Webster in his address at Plymouth are apt today: “Advance then, ye future generations, we would hail you as you rise in your long succession to fill the places which we now fill. We welcome you to the blessings of good government and religious liberty. We welcome you to the treasures of science and the delights of learning. We welcome you to the transcendent sweets of domestic life, to the happiness of parents and kindred and children. We welcome you to the immeasurable blessing of a national existence; the immortal hope of Christianity and the light of everlasting truth.” So we welcome young people—the leaders and workers of tomorrow.

Life has special meaning only when the conviction grips us that God meant each one of us for definite work, that he has matched

us with the hour of opportunity. The significant decision of every life is to surrender to God's will. "True statesmanship is to discover which way God is going and get the obstacles out of the way."

Over every profession, every calling, every vocation, the world has a high bid for the investment of life. The author of that splendid book, *The Christ of the Indian Road*, asked an earnest Hindu one day what he thought of Christ. He thoughtfully answered, "There is no one else who is seriously bidding for the heart of the world except Jesus Christ. There is no one else in the field." Sweep the horizon, is there anyone else? Is there anyone that is offering as high a bid for the investment of life as Christ? You may search in every direction but you will find nowhere anything comparable to what Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, offers for your life.

It is a great day in which to live. Notable and weighty issues are at stake. The youth of today will help solve these national, spiritual and denominational problems. America's true wealth is not her gold and bonds but the character of her people.

Gooddale in his *Obligation of Citizenship* says: "What the state needs more than armies and navies, more than cities and mines of gold and silver is men and women of exalted ideals and blameless lives who will contribute to that public sentiment which ever determines and enforces law. The state calls upon every boy and every girl for growth and development for her sake. She needs them in the home, in the school, on the street, wherever the busy shuttles are flying in the looms on which is being woven public opinion, that imperial power in a republic."

More imperious than the call of state, higher, more commanding than the proclamation of a nation is the call of God for the youth of today. His summons is to the gift superlative, "First they gave their own selves unto the Lord." After we have answered this call for an individual, voluntary surrender of our lives, the first challenge of the kingdom of God is flung at our feet. It was spoken twenty centuries ago by the boy Jesus, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" That is the first step in the investment of life,

—to be about our Father's business. It gives life a motive, a business, a powerful purpose. It means force plus direction. To answer this challenge will mean consecration. Achievement in any line means work, constant effort and sacrifice. The Christian life is not different. One has said, "Life is a cafeteria. There are no waiters to bring success to you. Help yourself." That high school class was right that had for its motto "The elevator to success is not running; take the stairs." Progress in any business means work, the denying of self.

A Spartan soldier once grumbled, "My sword is too short." The reply was, "Add a step to it." If we have but mediocre abilities and high ambitions we must add the step of extra effort. The business of the Father's kingdom demands the extra step.

William Carey said, "I make shoes for my living but my business is to win men for Christ." William Colgate's business was to make money for the kingdom of God. When he left home at sixteen an old family friend, the captain on the canal boat, took him to his quarters and prayed with him and asked him

to give his heart to Christ. He told William Colgate that somebody some day was going to be the biggest soapmaker in New York and it might just as well be he. His advice was—be a good man; give the Lord all that belongs to him of every dollar you earn. Make an honest soap and you will one day be a rich and prosperous man. The world knows that William Colgate prospered and ever as he prospered he gave more and more to God. It is said, at one time every employee was asked to give a tenth of his salary to the cause of Christ. Whether we make money for Christ, whether we teach, wherever we serve, the business of every Christian is to win men and women, boys and girls to Christ.

There has never been a time when the call to be about our Father's business was more insistent than today. There are unprecedented opportunities on every foreign field. While it is a day of unequaled foreign mission opportunity there is also a challenge for the investment of life in our great cities, in the rural districts, amid the red race and the black race. Every forty seconds a foreigner enters our harbors.

"I followed him to the ocean's rim
Where the ships of the world at anchor swim.
And he showed me the flow of the immigrant tide.
The human surge through our portals wide.

'Welcome these to your arms,' he said.
'These are the people for whom I bled.
Build them into your nation's life:
Use them as men with immortal life:
Give them the gifts I have given you:
This is your cross and your glory, too.' "

We should be about our Father's business to answer the quest of the hearts of men. The quest is the same today as that of the Greeks of old who stood without and said to Phillip, "Sir, we would see Jesus." One writer has suggested that these men may have seen the wonders of the world. They may have seen that symphony in stone, the Parthenon. They may have lived in cultured Athens or visited the imperial city of Rome, but they were not satisfied. Their quest was prophetic of the quest of the ages, we would see Jesus. The learning, science and invention of this age do not satisfy the hearts of men. The hearts of the world are blindly seeking the Christ, he answers the need of every heart. "To the artist he is the Altogether Lovely, the Chief Among Ten Thousand. To the banker he is the Hidden Treasure; to the baker, the Living

Bread. To the carpenter he is the Door; to the doctor, the Great Physician. To the farmer he is the Lord of the Harvest; to the florist the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley. To the geologist he is the Rock of Ages. To the horticulturist he is the True Vine; to the jeweler the Pearl of Great Price. To the lawyer he is Counselor, Lawgiver, Advocate, Judge. To the sinner he is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. What is he to you?" Does he mean so much that you are impelled by love to meet the need of others by being about the Father's business?

The challenge of Christ for the investment of your life in him is so compelling that every Christian should be about the Father's business.

The psalmist sang: "They looked unto him and were radiant." Our lives will be powerful and radiant in proportion to our vision of Christ. When we once see him in his radiant beauty and like Paul determine to know nothing save Christ and him crucified, then and only then, does our life become radiant. The call of every needy soul, the hunger and oppression of every child in the world, every

lost man and woman becomes the call of Christ.

When we turn the pages of sacred history the radiant souls stand out as flaming sentinels. Peter looked up from his fishing net one day and met the eyes of Jesus. Straightway he left his nets and followed the Master into a radiant life. First a rude fisherman of Galilee, then a spirit-filled man of Pentecost! Matthew sat at the receipt of the custom one day and the Radiance of the Ages passed by and said "Follow me." Matthew arose to seek hidden treasure. Martin Luther in the dimness of a cloister beheld the bright and morning Star, the Sun of Righteousness and followed his rays to a life of radiance. John Bunyan found the cold, damp stone floor of Bedford prison to be the upholding Rock of Ages. Adoniram Judson and Ann Hasseltine followed the Heavenly Bridegroom into a far country. The radiance of their lives still shines. Grace McBride found in Christ the Pearl of Great Price. She sold all that she had to possess it. His radiance led her to China. There she heard the "S. O. S." of the Red Cross during the World War calling,

"Come far out into Siberia and nurse the soldiers dying of typhus fever." She answered the call, and in far off Siberia the alabaster of her life was crushed at the feet of her Saviour. Its sacrificial sweetness makes fragrant the world, for Grace McBride organizations in Baptist hospitals are a memorial to her.

Undying radiance illumines the lives invested in the Father's business. There is a fable of a princess who was unable to choose between three stones. One was a sapphire as blue as the sea in summer, another was an emerald as green as the forest in the spring, the third a ruby that glowed like the heart of fire. The fairies took all three and melted them in the furnace of the sun, and they became one perfect jewel, in which could be seen the sapphire blue of the sea and the emerald green of the forest in the spring and the red glow of the heart of fire, all blended in one perfect jewel, an opal. So every perfection is in the Christ. He is the Altogether Lovely, the Chief among Ten Thousand, the Bright

and Morning Star. The life invested in him is the radiant life.

Wist ye not that we must be about the Father's business? Up—and follow the star trail.



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